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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PNAT](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: ALLAWI RECOMMENDS POSTPONEMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL  
REVIEW TO PRESERVE NATIONAL UNITY

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ZALMAY KHALILZAD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) In their January 8 meeting, Ayad Allawi told the Ambassador that Iraqi President Talabani believes that a national unity government is a must, but Dr. Allawi added that this must be a national unity government in reality, not just cosmetically. He also highlighted the importance of balance. (COMMENT: A not-so-veiled reference to the Sunni Arab/Allawi group idea of equal ministry distribution instead of giving weight to electoral results in the ministerial distribution. END COMMENT.) Dr. Allawi told the Ambassador that he will be meeting with President Talabani and KRG President Masoud Barzani after Id al-Adha. He said the Kurds could play a central role in these government formation negotiations, but they need to consider themselves Iraqis before they consider themselves Kurds.

2. (C) Dr. Allawi said the new government should not discuss "divisive issues", but should focus instead on unifying issues like security to stabilize Iraq and economic recovery (improving essential services). He specifically cited the constitutional review and federalism as examples of divisive issues, saying these will "add fuel to the fire." Dr. Allawi told the Ambassador that, if such issues are considered now, there will be serious problems and a potential for a political backfire, particularly given the upcoming provincial elections. Dr. Allawi suggested that these discussions will be easier if the security situation stabilizes and the economy grows; he recommended a delay of one to two years. The Ambassador said this program is worth studying and examining whether all sides could agree to postpone the constitutional review and the establishment of new federal regions. (COMMENT: The Sunni Arab blocs have been vocal in their demands for constitutional amendments; so any serious discussion of a delay would have to include a postponement of establishing new federal entities. END COMMENT.)

3. (C) Dr. Allawi said he told UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw that decision-making needs to be clear in the new government. The Ambassador suggested that government functions be divided by key sectoral areas: security, finance/economy, and services. By doing this, each sector will have multi-sectarian participation (managed by a Deputy Prime Minister or Deputy President). Dr. Allawi said this concept could help cement national unity.  
KHALILZAD